

The Convention.

This convention matter has attracted the attention of quite a number of the members, seeing that our leading writers differ so much in their opinions in regard to the design of this convention. Some appear to think that we are not properly organized into a church, or brotherhood and others think we are fully organized. Now brethren let us discuss this matter from a business standpoint, and we will be much closer together than we are at present. I must take a stand with Bro. Spanogle. I see his head is level on this subject. The truth of the whole matter is that there is no special cause for a convention at the present time. If there was a cause for a convention that would produce a work for a convention and you would find no trouble in spinning a program to meet the approval of the brotherhood.

Dear brethren and sisters, permit me to call your attention to last year's convention matters. Much had been said about having a convention last year, but the church had been burdened with the College debt, and we finally concluded to drop the convention question and unburden the church of that debt before we would burden the church with the expenses of a convention. But alas, where is our college matter today? Is the church unburdened of that debt or not, who will answer? Now I understand that our convention decided to take this debt upon the whole brotherhood as a national matter. Now if I understand some of our leading writers that the work of our coming convention in part will be to establish a national treasury fund to reach the whole brotherhood. This fund is to be used for missionary purposes. I can sanction the advancement of the missionary cause very freely but not by making a national debt on the brotherhood, but let us organize in states or districts and by so doing we will not burden the whole brotherhood, by our own mismanagement or oversight. The devil wants no better mortgage on a church than to get it in debt pretty well.

Now brethren, I wish to give some practical advice as I have had quite an amount of experience in financial business. Do not have any decisions passed to involve the church in debt. Somebody will suffer loss by it and we may lose some of our best, substantial members by over taxing them. And again you may send some of our poor ministers in the field to labor and not have the money to pay them when they stand in need of it to support their families. By all means have the money secured before you send men out to labor. The only safe way for us to do is for us not to take more than we know we can carry, then we will make a success of our business and if we make a debt on the state of Iowa we do not propose to call on California or Pennsylvania or Ohio to help us out, while we know the wants of the people in Iowa better than California does. We can provide for our wants better than they can. We think our brotherhood at large would be better pleased to do our business by states or districts, than to make a national matter of it, and as we have all accepted and adopted the Gospel alone platform and that Gospel teaches the same in Iowa as it does in Ohio or Indiana or any other state; and the whole brotherhood professes to be governed by that same Gospel. Then there is no need to go to some other state to learn our duties in the advancement of missionary work.

The missionary cause is something worthy of our notice and we should make ample provisions for it as well as for all other Christian duties, but if we want to make a success of it we must get up a system that will meet the approval of a majority of the brotherhood and when we go to discuss this matter let us not get on too much "steam," as some do in writing on this subject, or we will let it off to waste, or get the "cart before the horse," to raise the money to support something that does not yet exist. We should have a decision adopted before we raise the money to support it. Suppose the convention decides against a national or general treasury fund, but would decide that states or districts shall organize into a systematic order and go to work and raise all the money they could to support the missionary cause, and not the general fund system, then it will prove to us that we first

adopt a plan before we try to raise the means to support it. Let us not get an elephant before we can take care of him, and if we ever wish to rise to the top of the ladder, we must take our start on the lower part first to make a success.

We can see the fruits of overreaching our means on the college matter, and take warning by that for it is the means of confusing and demoralizing the church.

We have some very good, able ministers to fill the pulpit, which we esteem very highly and they fill that place well and are successful in that place.

But if we take them away from that place and put them to managing financial affairs, we will take them out of their element and they will frequently prove a failure. Then let us consult financiers when we have financial affairs to arrange, and all can be employed in their proper sphere and work in harmony.

Bro. Mason and Bro. Beer have given some good logical reasoning on the subject, and now I wish to say to all the dear members in the brotherhood that if my views on the convention does not meet your approbation, please do not be offended at them, and if you wish to criticise my views please use Christian courtesy as it is not my desire to offend any one.

One more thought, and that is, how are the churches to instruct their delegates at home when sent to this convention, when we do not know what is to come before the convention. Will those who advance this idea please explain?

SAMUEL CAIN.

In a Mysterious Way.

Selected by Sister Snader.

"No," said the lawyer, "I sha'n't press your claim against that man; you can get some one else to take the case, or you can withdraw it, just as you please."

"Think there isn't any money in it?"

"There would probably be some money in it, but it would, as you know, come from the sale of the little house the man occupies and calls 'home'; but I don't want to meddle with the matter, anyhow."

"Got frightened out of it, eh?"

"No, I wasn't frightened out of it."

"I suppose likely the old fellow begged hard to be let off?"

"Well—yes, he did."

"And you caved, likely?"

"No, I didn't speak a word to him."

"Oh, he did all the talking, did he?"

"Yes."

"And you never said a word?"

"Not a word."

"What in creation did you do?"

"I believe I shed a few tears."

"And the old fellow begged you hard, you say?"

No, I didn't say so; he didn't speak a word to me."

"Well, may I respectfully inquire whom he did address in your hearing?"

"God Almighty."

"Ah! he took to praying, did he?"

"Not for my benefit, in the least. You see"—the lawyer placed his right foot over his left knee, and began stroking his lower leg up and down, as if to help state his case concisely—"you see. I found the little house easily enough, and knocked on the outer door which stood ajar, but nobody heard me, so I stepped into the little hall, and saw through the crack of another door just as cozy a sitting room as there ever was."

"There on a bed with her silver head way up high on pillows, was an old lady who looked for all the world just as my mother did the last time I ever saw her on earth. Well, I was right on the point of knocking, when she said, as clearly as could be, 'Come father, now begin; I am all ready'—and down on his knees by her side went an old, white-haired man, still older than his wife, I should judge; and I couldn't have knocked then for the life of me. Well, he began; first he reminded God they were still his submissive children, mother and he, and no matter what he saw fit to bring upon them, they shouldn't rebel at his will; of course 'twas going to be terrible hard for them to go out

homeless in their old age, specially with poor mother so sick and helpless, but still they had seen sadder things than ever that would be. He reminded God in the next place how different it all might have been if only one of their sons might have been spared them; then his voice kind of broke, and a thin, white hand stole from under the coverlet and moved softly over his snowy hair; then he went on to repeat that nothing could be so sharp again as the parting again with those three sons—unless mother and he should be separated. But at last he fell to comforting himself with the fact that the dear Lord knew it was through no fault of his own that mother and he were threatened with the loss of their dear little home, which meant beggary and the almshouse, a place they prayed to be delivered from entering, if it could be consistent with God's will; and then he fell to quoting a multitude of promises concerning the safety of those who put their trust in the Lord; yes, I should say he begged hard; in fact it was the most thrilling plea to which I ever listened: and at last he prayed for God's blessing on those who were about to demand justice"—the lawyer stroked his lower limb in silence for a moment or two, then continued more slowly than ever:

"And—I—believe—I'd rather go to the poor-house myself to-night, than to stain my heart and hands with the blood of such a prosecution as that."

"Little afraid to defeat the old man's prayer, eh?" queried the client.

"Bless your soul, man, you couldn't defeat it!" roared the lawyer. "It doesn't admit of defeat! I tell you he left it all subject to the will of God; but he left no doubt as to his wishes in the matter; claimed that we were told to make known our desires unto God; but all of the pleading I ever heard, that beat all. You see, I was taught that kind of a thing myself in my childhood, and why I was sent to hear that prayer, I'm sure I don't know; but I hand the case over."

"I wish," said the client, twisting uneasily, "you hadn't told me about the old fellows prayer."

"Why so?"

"Well, because; I want the money confoundedly the place would bring, but I was taught the Bible all fair enough when I was a youngster, and I hate to run counter to such a harangue as that you tell me about. I wish you hadn't heard a word of it; another time I wouldn't listen to petitions not intended for your ears."

The lawyer smiled.

"My dear fellow" he said, "you're wrong again; it was intended for my ears, and yours too, and God Almighty intended it. My old mother used to sing about God's moving in mysterious way, I remember."

"Well my mother used to sing it too," said the claimant, as he twisted his claim papers in his fingers. "You can call in the morning, if you like, and tell 'mother and him' the claim has been met."

"In a mysterious way," added the lawyer smiling.—THE CHRISTIAN UNION.

There is an earnest and strong effort now being made by the Presbyterian general Assembly of the North now assembled at Omaha, and by a majority of the general assembly South, now in session at St. Louis, to unite the two bodies in one. This of course, is highly commendable. But there appears to be quite a numerous and influential minority in the Southern body who still cherish bitter memories of the war, and are opposed to the reunion. From present appearances the union will be effected in the near future. There are certainly many more and stronger reasons why Christian churches should now bury the past, return to fraternal union and fellowship than there is for political parties to do so. There are still irritating causes pending to prevent the hearty reunion of the latter, but there are but few, if any, that should prevent the former from coming together again in a Christian spirit and thereby heal up the unseemly division.

A good deal is said in these days about not muzzling the ox that treadeth out the corn, but we must be very careful lest we leave the impression that we are advocating that the ox should eat up all the corn. One extreme is so often followed by another. One set will argue "no corn," and another set will clamor for all the corn. Let us keep within bounds brethren, and watch this old sinful heart of ours.